Attendees: 18 + city and county staff

General Discussion

- What is 'Community Character'?

- The integration of the natural and built environment
- What you feel when you walk, bike and drive around town
- o The materials, colors and architectural details of the community that say "this is who we are".

Other city examples of GREAT character:

- European cities small mountain towns in the Alps (Germany, Switzerland, Austria, France). You
 can FEEL the land around you; the roads and buildings are all really connected to the environment;
 good walkability it is easy to walk around; some buildings can be modern, but with old town
 charm; historic buildings are accepted and preserved with the integration of contemporary
 buildings that FIT in with the old.
- o Chicago, IL neighborhoods which are very distinct with each other.
- Madison, WI clear demonstration of shared values work hard, play hard, BIKE PATHS, sailing, beer-making.
- Telluride, Durango and Georgetown, CO Georgetown has the NICEST visitor center ever seen, and the downtown buildings are very nicely kept and painted with historically correct and cheerful colors, there are flowers everywhere, you have a very happy feeling.
- Portland and Seattle cities of neighborhoods
- General comments:
 - 1. Constant connection with the natural environment views, landscaping, materials
 - 2. Sense of history and having history a part of the environment
 - 3. Demonstration of shared values
 - 4. Vibrant and economically diverse downtown

- Questions we (Flagstaff community) should ask ourselves regarding various aspects (particular neighborhood, corridors, public spaces):

- O Who would care about this place?
- Who would be willing to raise their taxes to make this a better place?
- O Where do people want to go when they visit?
- Traffic how can we balance the community's values (walkability, connection to the natural environment, bicycling safety) with the need for traffic to flow.

Who are we?

 Entrance – Milton Road – AWEFUL introduction to our community; worst building – Barnes & Noble (NOT Flagstaff). The natural view is BEAUTIFUL; the urban view is not pleasant or welcoming. There is no pedestrian safety priorities, no parkways, no medians, etc.

- <u>Dilapidated buildings and homes</u> find examples from other communities of how to balance the "impositions" of rules with how to clean up the "impositions" in our neighborhoods, and realizing that there is not only one way for a neighborhood to look.
- What do we compromise in a community to maintain character and protect citizens, yet <u>ALLOW for</u> differences?
- o "Distressed" means: needs some TLC

Break out group 1 - URBAN DESIGN: Entrances, Gateways, Viewsheds, Heritage Preservation, Streetscapes, Planning and Public Art

REGIONAL 'Community Character'?

- Views of the peaks
- Walnut Canyon
- Surrounding Forest
- Open Space meadows
- Forested Interstate medians
- Dark Skies
- Train
- Airport exit
- Naval Observatory
- Metal Bridges
- o Conext of I-40 / I-17 to the community = disconnected
- o I-17 into town lack of transition ("you have arrived at Flagstaff" is not there)

- LOCAL 'Community Character'?

- Engineering standards to not reflect community design
- o Need urban design standards for Lone Tree to prevent another 'Milton Road'

PUBLIC SPACE 'Community Character'?

- Parkways 'improved' landscaped, trees, rocks
- Planning order of priorities MUST be evident when you look at a street:
 - 1. Pedestrians
 - 2. Bicycles
 - 3. Transit
 - 4. Automobiles
- Need cross-connections
- o Historic Preservation with (and for) economic development
- Economic Gardening
- Balanced Standards adaptive (and rules with resources?)
- Improved streetscape: more (drought-tolerant) landscaping and larger sidewalks-

PROPERTY RIGHTS – vs – STANDARDS

- Policy of <u>putting utilities underground</u> neither (eventually no overhead lines nor huge electrical boxes on prominent urban corners or streetscapes for existing areas, not new) – to preserve our beautiful environment (as economic development, environmental conservation AND social betterment). How to balance this with affordability.
- Electrical boxes need to be coordinated with site design and placed appropriately, screened and yet still easy to access.
- Downtown parking CARS, yet making pedestrians a priority how?
- Parking less impact on the public realm?
- o Buildings FORWARD parking behind or beside.
- Form-Based-Code incentives

Design Traditions of Flagstaff Region

- Craftsman rusticated
- o Do not recreate Flagstaff 'Disneyland' it does not all have to look 1920's
- o NAU Frankie Building
- Natural materials (are expensive)
- Honest materials pragmatic in use and available. Example of the 'Credit Union'
- Simple rusticated materials and design does not have to be more expensive, but more thoughtful

Build UP, not OUT

- o Reduce new infrastructure costs use existing infrastructure
- Increase density (in appropriate places)
- Reasonable code to not create too much mass
- o Trade-offs? Views or height? there are mitigations, compromises and design solutions
- Context sensitive –

- Viewsheds

- Cannot lose ridge lines
- Challenge to identify (views to and from)
- o Identify viewsheds to protect that makes sense need a map in Regional Plan

- Parks / Open Space

- Always a need for playgrounds "It's my park"
- Able to walk to your local park
- Neighborhoods come together to celebrate heritage events, opportunities for people to meet people.
- Looked at
- Neighborhood parks linked to FUTS
- When Lone Tree _____ look at: a) Way signing, b) Entry enhancement, c)
- A hub on Fourth Street –

- National Forest is not a park
- o Parks are valued by children and families
- Tourists and visitors come for events (in the parks)

Public Art

- o From government BBB-tax revenue generated
- Context is important
 - 1. String of lights across bridge FL Wright
 - 2. Alien Out houses
- Incorporate as fundamental part of Flagstaff
- o Currently, it tends to be an after-thought
- Private sector incentive
- Public sector
 - 1. Example Graffiti removal- \$ to do so
 - 2. -
- o Require cultural assessment for any development; likely resources via vi standards....

Break out group 2 - NEIGHBORHOODS: Preservation, revitalization, redevelopment, public spaces

Neighborhood <u>PRESERVATION</u>

- Maintain historic character and cultural diversity
- o Maintain old things and existing features even if remodeling, upgrading and finding a new use
- Ownership pride of place
- Walkability proximity to transit, store and school
- Keeping areas affordable reduce 'gentrification' how?
- Rural character
- o PMO
- o Historic Preservation tools and resources to help average (working, not wealthy) homeowner?

Neighborhood <u>REVITALIZATION</u>

- Fixing what is already in place
- Adding new vigor to a building, street or neighborhood with remodeling, fixing up, adding an activity (playground) means to 'revitalize'.
- Keep human scale
- Corner stores
- o Places for people to gather
- Separate bike lanes
- Low speed limits
- o Sidewalks complete and larger

SAFE neighborhood – deal with crime

Neighborhood <u>REDEVELOPMENT</u>

- Coming in with something NEW, yet keeping with the character of the surrounding community
- Generally needed and desired, not sure of how to overcome some major obstacles
- Modern technology with respect for context
- Maintain and promote a sense of place
- o Infill instead of sprawl is desired

- Define <u>SLUM AND BLIGHT</u>

- o Use state statute definitions, then adapt for 'Flagstaff' in Regional plan
- Need definition to clearly identify 'infill' and 'redevelopment' areas on a Regional Plan map

Obstacles to Neighborhood PRESERVATION, REVITALIZATION, and REDEVELOPMENT

- Absentee Landlord
- Cost / Affordability / Resources
- Community sense of respect pride of place is sometimes lacking
- Education of what it means and how to do it
- CLEAN UP FIX UP PAINT UP Weekend
- Community Accountability
- o Lack of homeownership renters do not tend to care for properties like homeowners
- o How to encourage LANDLORDS to be compelled to care for homes and buildings?
- Strong Property Rights

- Examples from DOWNTOWN

- o Brick buildings and sidewalks
- Old / quaint
- Rock houses
- Big street TREES Tree list with native / non-native
- o 2-lane streets with street parking, parkways (where you plant trees), sidewalks
- o Streets define the neighborhood
- Historical

Examples from TOWNSITE

- o "The Den" cozy family play and hang-out space
- Small, modest homes
- Front porch
- Alleys parking in back
- Livable walkable, bike-able, visiting with neighbors

Examples from COCONINO ESTATES

- o Spacious
- Suburban
- Ranch Homes
- Auto-focused no sidewalks
- o Driveways and parking in front
- o Fewer through streets slower auto traffic
- Connected open lawns
- Green grass lawns large! Many houses have wells that water them.
- These lawns fit the character of the homes and time period

- Examples from RIO HOMES

- Monotonous
- Failure
- College kids
- Street parking
- Alley
- o Crowded
- Stark let landscaping grow up
- Need shared green space '
- o Modern architecture that works with the context of a mountain town
- This seems inappropriate for an end community this density should have been built in a through community with better connections to transit, FUTS and campus
- Affordable

Examples from SUNNYSIDE / 4th Street

- Affordability for businesses
- Ample parking!
- Transit parking
- Multi-cultural
- Center of town
- o Future ideas for 'character' of Fourth Street:
 - 1. Pedestrian-friendly
 - 2. Streetscape improvements
 - 3. Break up the asphalt
 - 4. Multi-use, Multi-story AFFORDABLE!!
 - 5. Continue and celebrate multi-cultural
 - 6. Bicycle Friendly
 - 7. Police presence get out of the cars and walk / bicycle around talk to people in a friendly way

Examples from DONEY PARK

- No Transit community of driving by CHOICE
- Sprawl
- Live in trees or in the open
- Views
- No commercial
- o Horse & agricultural friendly
- Unique and diverse housing
- Lack of urban items (curbs, gutters, sidewalks) are good truly rural roads
- Dark and quiet at night

Examples from FORT VALLEY

- History
- Wealthy and less diversity
- Scenery

Examples from KACHINA VILLAGE

- Funky
- Once affordable

For all neighborhoods:

- Recognizing different areas and their unique character
- Power to affect how a neighborhood looks
- Address the two neighborhoods never mentioned: gated communities and trailer parks